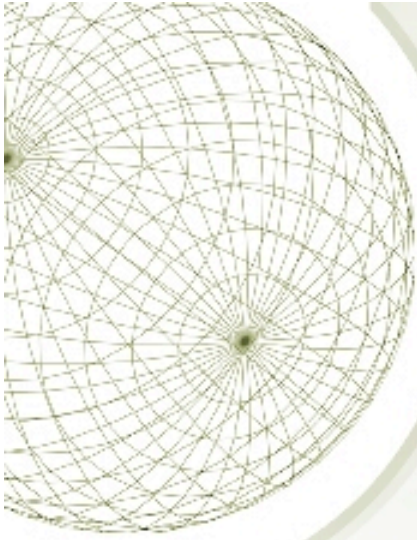


Knowing How We are Doing: Quality of Life Indicators for Virginia

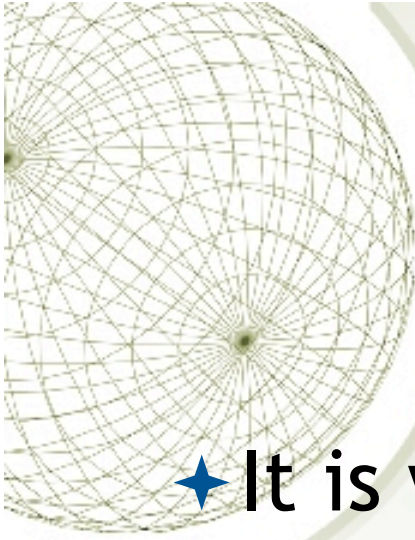
Presentation to:
The Council on Virginia's Future
October 30, 2006

By
Dr. William Shobe
Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, UVa



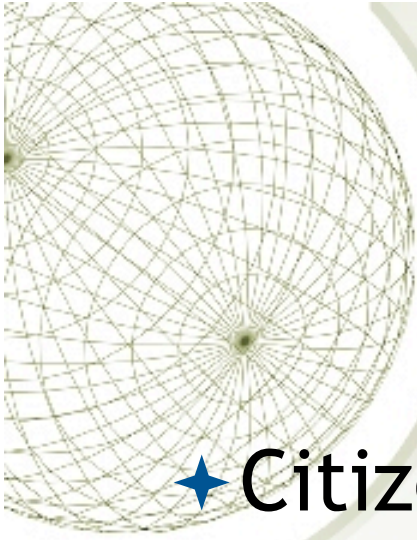
*We are confronted with
insurmountable
opportunities!*

-Pogo



What is “Quality of Life”?

- ★ It is what people care about
- ★ It is subjective and personal
- ★ It can be ephemeral in the details
 - ★ Focus changes day-to-day
- ★ The essentials don't change much
 - ★ The big concerns stay the same



Whose opinion matters?

- ★ Citizens of Virginia

- ★ Government is an extension of the citizens' will

- ★ Other folks

- ★ People who might move to Virginia
- ★ Tourists and travelers
- ★ Merchants and businessmen




What do people care about?

- ★ Personal health and safety
- ★ Economic opportunity and well-being
- ★ Political freedom and autonomy
- ★ Community life
- ★ Mobility
- ★ Environmental quality

A decorative wireframe sphere is positioned in the upper left corner of the slide. It consists of a grid of lines forming a sphere, with a small dark dot at its center. The sphere is partially obscured by the title text.

Securing these good things

- ★ Individual choices
 - ★ Personal initiative and responsibility
- ★ Markets
 - ★ Institutions for voluntary exchange
- ★ Community
 - ★ Joint efforts by private individuals
- ★ Government
 - ★ Where a collective response is needed



Government and accountability

- ★ What should government do?
 - ✦ When private initiative isn't enough
- ★ What can government do?
 - ✦ Analysis, expertise, and experience
- ★ How are we doing?
 - ✦ Measuring outcomes is important
 - ✦ Don't expect a single measure of success
 - ✦ Managerial judgment
 - ✦ Political accountability



An article of faith

- ★ The more information that citizens and elected representatives have about government performance, the better government will be.



The indicators

- ★ Economy
- ★ Education
- ★ Health & family
- ★ Public safety
- ★ Natural resources
- ★ Transportation
- ★ Government & citizens



What the indicators tell us

- ★ How are we doing?
 - ✦ Improving, steady, declining
 - ✦ Compared to the nation and other states
- ★ What influence do we have?
 - ✦ Are values driven by outside factors?
- ★ What tradeoffs do we face?
- ★ How do Virginia's regions differ?



Trends

★ Improving

- ★ Income, employment, dropout rate, teen births, smoking, property crime, air quality

★ Maintaining

- ★ Violent crime, water quality, solid waste, school readiness, workforce quality, graduation rates

★ Losing ground

- ★ Obesity, congestion, poverty rate, transportation infrastructure, consumer protection



Areas of influence

★ Significant influence

- ★ Immunization, infant mortality, infrastructure and congestion, standards of learning, bond rating, reading & math, land preservation

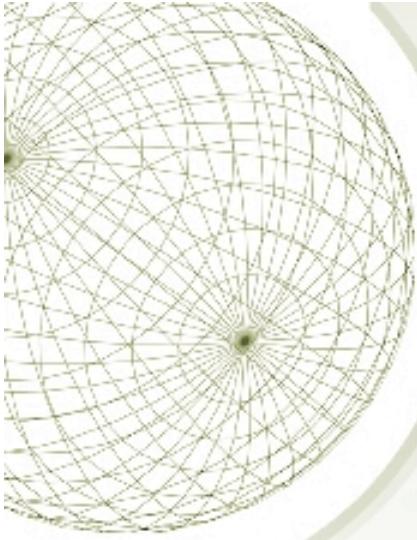
★ Limited influence

- ★ Economic performance (short run), obesity, suicides, cardio-vascular and cancer death rates, land use



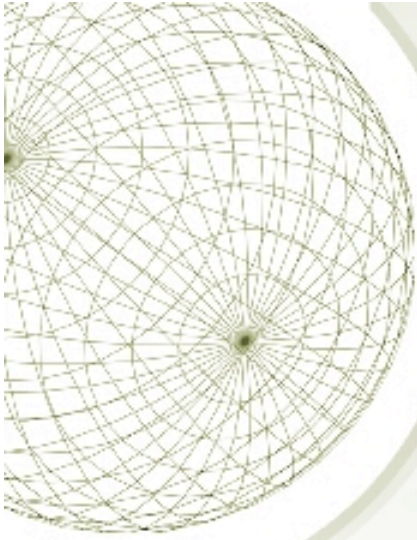
Regional differences

- ★ Indicators with wide regional variation
 - ★ Income, uninsured, preserved land, air quality, high school education outcomes, crime
- ★ Indicators with relatively little regional variation
 - ★ SOL pass rate, cancer death rate, alcohol-related crash fatalities



A look at the indicators

- ★ A quick tour of the Virginia Performs indicators.



Conclusion

- ★ The Virginia Performs indicators point us toward an improved quality of life in Virginia.